

of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by whom a great deal is due to his memory—not only by the Commonwealth, but by the nation as well. He was a great grandson of Wilhelm, who was the first in this country of the name of Rittenhouse, or Rittenhausen, and all the descendants are entirely by or of him. He (Wilhelm) was a man of unusual capacity and exhibited much enthusiasm in establishing a freedom of thought. When Wilhelm landed here, from some accounts we have of him, he seemed to be moved by high motives to travel around, and finally he settled at Germantown, and his industry caused him to search about for a location for the business of his own choice and impulses. He selected the first real estate for business on a branch of the Wissahickon, Paper Mill Run, which was and is known in history as 'the original 20 acres.' He proved his industry by building up a paper mill, which was the first paper mill in this country. Since then it is almost impossible to say how many establishments have been created. There are over 12,000 descendants of Wilhelm Rittenhausen. He stood in a building on the spot on which this house is built to preach the gospel to his relatives and associates. The tract of land on which the mill stood was leased in 1690, on the 29th of September. After a few years a more effectual deed was secured. In '1705-6 Nicholas, his son, became partial owner with him. They built a house on the property. In 1707 it was the dwelling of Mathias, son of Nicholas, and it was while there David, a son of Mathias, was born. Not much improvement was made on the place until the year 1869, when a chapel was built. It would seem that this spot of ground had been watched over and taken care of by some power that had preserved it for such purposes until within the last couple of years. In 1869, one hundred years after David made the observation of the transit of 'Venus,' the writer became possessor of the history of David Rittenhouse, and decided that a continued history of the family or descendants ought to be prepared and kept.